

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

a 1. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) An embossing tool for mechanically embossing ~~a surface covering~~ an article comprising ~~[[:]]~~ a solidified slurry, the solidified slurry being resolvable ~~having a pattern and releasably attached to a backing, and the slurry comprising a filler and a binder.~~

2. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, wherein the solidified slurry is substantially stable at a temperature range of about 200°F to about 450°F.

3. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, ~~wherein the~~ further comprising a backing ~~[[is]]~~ selected from the group consisting of a roll, a drum, a belt, a plate and combinations thereof.

4. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, wherein the solidified slurry comprises a filler and a binder ~~is biodegradable.~~

5. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the binder ~~comprises a gelatin~~ is biodegradable.

6. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim [[1]] 4, wherein the solidified slurry comprises a binder selected from the group consisting of gelatin, cornstarch and combinations thereof.

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Claim 7 (Cancelled)

8. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim [[1]] 4, wherein the filler ~~comprises~~ is selected from the group consisting of clay, limestone and combinations thereof.

9. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim [[1]] 4, wherein the filler has an average mesh size ~~of between~~ ranging from about 20 [[and]] to about 400.

10. (Withdrawn) The embossing tool of claim 9, wherein the embossing tool has at least two different sized fillers.

11. (Withdrawn) The embossing tool of claim 10, wherein a first sized filler has a mesh size ranging from about 20 to about 60 and a second sized filler has a mesh size ranging from about 250 to about 450.

12. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, wherein the solidified slurry ~~pattern~~ is ~~printed~~ in register with a pattern printed on the ~~surface-covering~~ article.

13. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, wherein the solidified slurry is recyclable.

a 14. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 1, wherein the solidified slurry comprises:

filler from ~~between~~ about ~~[[30]]~~ 54.5% to about ~~[[70]]~~ 93.3% by weight;

~~water from about 5% to about 70% by weight; and~~

a binder from ~~between~~ about ~~[[5]]~~ 6.7% to about ~~[[25]]~~ 45.5% by weight.

15. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) The embossing tool of claim 14, wherein the solidified slurry further comprises up to about ~~[[15]]~~ 35.7% by weight of a plasticizer.

16. (Withdrawn - Original) The embossing tool of claim 15, wherein the plasticizer comprises a vegetable oil.

17. (Withdrawn) The embossing tool of claim 1, further including a biocide.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of ~~manufacturing~~ a mechanically
~~embossed surface covering~~ embossing an article comprising pressing a solidified ~~[[:]~~
~~printing a slurry in a pattern onto a surface covering or surface covering~~
component;
~~heating the slurry residing on the surface covering;~~
~~compressing the slurry into the~~ article, the solidified slurry being resolvable surface
~~covering; and~~
~~removing the slurry.~~

Claims 19 and 20 (Cancelled)


21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the
solidified slurry is ~~compressed onto~~ pressed into the ~~surface covering~~ article by an
embossing a roll.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 21, wherein the ~~embossing~~
roll has a textured surface.

23. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42,
wherein the solidified slurry is ~~compressed onto~~ pressed into the ~~surface covering~~ article
by ~~an embossing~~ a belt or ~~embossing~~ plate.

24. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the solidified slurry is applied by screen printing onto the ~~surface covering~~ article.

25. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the slurry comprises a filler and a binder.

 26. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 25, wherein the binder is biodegradable.

27. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the slurry is applied to the article in ~~registered~~ registration with a printed pattern on the ~~surface covering~~ article.

28. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the slurry is reclaimed after being removed from the ~~surface covering~~ article.

29. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the article is a surface covering ~~comprises~~ comprising an expandable foam layer, and at least one foaming modifier selected from the group consisting of an inhibitor ~~or~~ and an activator ~~composition~~ disposed as a pattern proximate the foam layer, and wherein the surface covering is expanded and chemically embossed during the ~~heating~~ solidifying step.

30. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 42, wherein the ~~surface covering or surface covering component~~ article is chemically embossed before the slurry is applied.

31. (Currently Amended) A The method of ~~manufacturing a mechanically embossed surface covering~~ claim 18, comprising:

a) ~~printing and solidifying a~~ applying the slurry in a pattern onto a backing;
solidifying the applied slurry to create an embossing tool; and
using the embossing tool to mechanically emboss ~~a surface texture onto a surface covering~~ the article.

Claim 32 (Cancelled)

33. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 31, wherein the backing is selected from the group consisting of a belt, a drum, a roll, a plate and combinations thereof.

34. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 31, wherein the slurry is applied by screen printing onto the backing.

35. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 31, wherein the slurry comprises a filler and a binder.

36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[31]]~~ 35, wherein the binder is biodegradable.

37. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the slurry is ~~printed~~ applied in register with a printed pattern on the ~~surface-covering~~ article.

38. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, further including removing the solidified slurry after embossing the ~~texture onto the surface-covering~~ article.

39. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 38, wherein the slurry is reclaimed after being removed from the article.

40. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the ~~surface covering~~ article is chemically embossed.

41. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, further including imparting a differential gloss on the ~~surface-covering~~ article.

42. (New) The method of claim 18, comprising:
printing the slurry onto a surface the article;
solidifying the slurry residing on the article;

pressing the solidified slurry into the article; and
then removing the solidified slurry.

43. (New) The method of claim 18, wherein the article is a surface covering.

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44. (New) The method of claim 31, wherein the article is a surface covering.

45. (New) The method of claim 42, wherein the article is a surface covering.
